

Slim Sheaf

b y

Irvin Haas

to my mother

THE STOKER

LOVE was but a feeble flame,

'Till flippant Isadora came.

She breathed but once,

It blazed anew,

It leaped, it danced,

It fell, it flew,

When fickle Isadora came.

Then Dora left to fan to life,

Some other struggling spark.

Leaving me to sweep the ash,

And stumble in the dark.

TO PAUL VERLAIN

You who fondled every passion,
Drifted with each mood and thought,
Molded words in lovely fashion,
Spun soft webs wherein was caught,
All of evening's mystic stillness,
And the moonlight's hollow beams,
Sang of that delightful illness
Love, and all its torpid dreams.

SALOME

Tonight,
You dance for me alone;
Beneath a Hebron sky.
No lips but mine
Will pipe a tune,
No eyes but mine,
Will pry.

DEPARTURE

MY heart
Is a deserted farm;
You sowed
Your seeds
In my earth;
But when they ripened into grain,
You tore them up
By the roots,
Leaving jagged gaps,
And ragged furrows.

THE RETURN

I shall not come,
Laden with chiseled jade,
With splendid furs, and silkens made
By artist's hands.
I'll bring a bit of crystal bead,
A wisp of woven lace, a poem to read,
But you will not care;
You will welcome them
With little cries of delight,
And I'll rejoice at the sight
Of your laughing face.
You will kiss me
As though they were treasures rare
From antique tombs,
And I will feel like a king,
Who with a careless fling,
Throws his crown at the feet of his beloved.

I

THE sun,
Behind the bamboo brakes,
Is a wounded crane,
Breast pierced,
By the rays of the moon,
Flutters bleeding,
Beyond the mountain.

II

THE moon,
Is a dull grey
Cameo,
Carved,
By the cold
Steel rays,
Of the stars.

SUMMER LULLABY

THE wind is adrift on a green leaf ship,
And afloat on a summer sea,
And the roses nod as she softly glides,
Past the babe who sleeps on the lea.

The cotton puff clouds float low in the sky,
And rest on the branch of a tree ,
And little white birds trill songs from above,
To the babe who sleeps on the lea.

All are asleep save the birds and brook,
And the flowers and the busy brown bee,
But soon they will nod and shut their eyes,
And sleep with the babe on the lea.

THE EVENING SONG

SOFTLY through the evening haze,
Came the sleepy evening song;
Song that wove a dreamy maze,
Softly through the evening haze,
Painting stars with sheeny glaze,
Echoes swelling low and long,
Softly through the evening haze,
Came the sleepy evening song.

THE CITY ON THE HILL

(FOR DAVID WRUBEL)

I walked past the city on the hill last night,
Past long green slopes that met the stars.
No hale haloo broke the serried silence,
For where were the faint fair forms of lovers?
There was a copper moon last night,
Curved as the birches above the graves,
Slim as the chill white stones.
Where were the hidden caresses of lovers?
Perhaps if I were to look behind that stone,
But no. they may all be asleep.

PROEM

HERE are jagged bits of stone,
Roughened chips from a mountain pine,
Ragged, nude, and much alone,
Graceless objects, but all mine.

ON THE DEATH OF AN OPERA SINGER

THE red bird does not sing today;
Her wings are stiff and still,
Her head is bowed as if to pray;
The red bird does not sing today;
No tunes shall soar all free and gay,
From coated tree to stolid hill;
The red bird does not sing today,
Her wings are stiff and still.

TO R . . .

I could but stare when you passed,
Just that, then nod my head,
For youth bows before loveliness,
As one before the dead.

THE TRIOLET

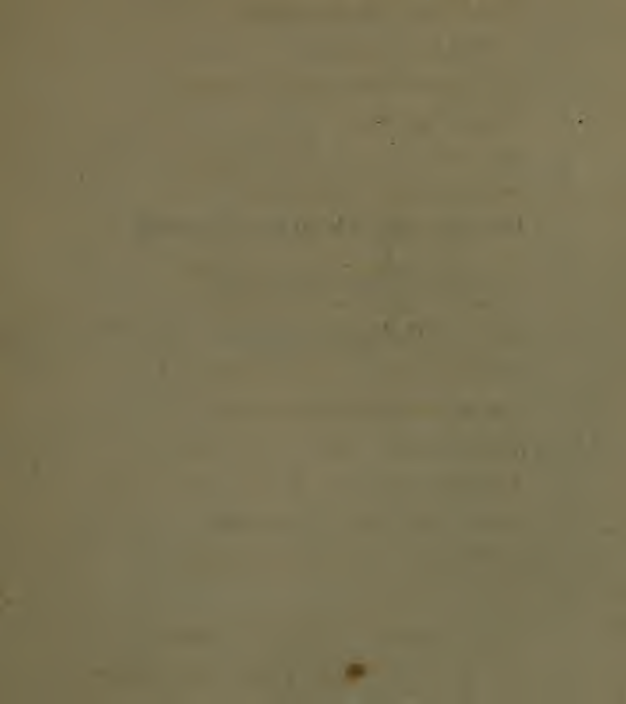
THE triolet is like a bell,
A silver bell, with tone so clear,
The music of it suits me well,
The triolet is like a bell,
Just strike it once and hear it swell,
With harmony so pure to hear,
The triolet is like a bell,
A silver bell, with tone so clear.

POEM FOR BORIS TODRIN

I built a tower of cold rough stone,
And in it's top most room I placed,
All things I have loved, and known
To be worthy of that love, it faced
The dull dead brown of a mighty hill,
And the clear blue sheen of an unnamed sea,
Together they seemed to fill,
All the world from the sky to me,
I built a tower of cold rough stone,
Secure from wind and beating spray,
In the top most room I stand alone,
With hill and sea, in the ending day.

APPEAL

Why do you seek the shadows,
When I seek the sun?
Has your love then meant so little,
That you are silent?
Is there no future in your schemes?
Or is life a strip of blackness,
For you to hide behind?
Will you never come into the light?
Or are you afraid that the light
Will reveal something,
Something that you want hidden?
Are you content to grieve alone?
Grief is sweeter when drunk by the two
Who have poured all the wine of their love,
All the bitters of disillusionment,
Mixing it with two splintered souls.
It is not too late.
Let us go together under those trees,
And listen to the wind breathe upon the stars.



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